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FILING DATE.**

APPLICATION NUMBER: 60/369,853**FILING DATE: April 05, 2002****RELATED PCT APPLICATION NUMBER: PCT/US03/10354**

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April 5, 2002

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Dear Sir:

Please file the attached specification as a new provisional patent application:

Title: **LIQUID-ASSISTED CRYOGENIC CLEANING**

Attorney's docket no.: **PAT 51858P-2**

Fees: **Please charge to the Borden Ladner Gervais LLP deposit account no. 501593 in the amount of \$160 to cover the large entity filing fee. Any deficiency or overpayment should also be charged or credited to this deposit account. An extra copy of this page is attached.**

Entitled to small entity fees? **No**

No. of pages in specification: **Three (3)**

Sole or first inventor: **BANERJEE, Souvik**
Residence: **Fremont, California, U.S.A.**
Citizenship: **Indian**
Full post office address: **4458 Gibraltar Drive
Fremont, California, 94536
U.S.A.**

Borden Ladner Gervais LLP
Lawyers • Patent & Trade-mark Agents
World Exchange Plaza
100 Queen Street, Suite 1100
Ottawa ON K1P 1J9
tel.: (613) 237-5160 fax: (613) 787-3558
toll free: (800) 661-4237
ipinfo@blgcanada.com
www.blgcanada.com



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Page 2

Second inventor: **CHUNG, Harlan Forrest**
Residence: **Castro Valley, California, U.S.A.**
Citizenship: **American**
Full post office address: **16848 Columbia Drive
Castro Valley, California 94552
U.S.A.**

Send correspondence to: **R. Craig Armstrong
(Registration no. 30,910)
Borden Ladner Gervais LLP
100 Queen Street, Suite 1100
Ottawa, Ontario,
Canada K1P 1J9**

Direct telephone calls /
faxes to: **R. Craig Armstrong
Tel. (519) 741-9100
Fax (519) 741-9149**

We look forward to confirmation of filing in due course.

Yours very truly,

Borden Ladner Gervais LLP

**R. Craig Armstrong
Registration No. 30,910**

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LIQUID-ASSISTED CRYOGENIC CLEANING

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Field of the Invention

The invention proposes to use a liquid either simultaneously or sequentially with CO₂ snow cleaning to aid in removal of foreign materials (FM), e.g. particles and other contaminants, from semiconductor surfaces and other surfaces involved in precision cleaning.

It has been well established that for the defect-free manufacturing of integrated circuits, the minimum particle size that is considered to be a killer defect is 1/10th of the feature size (the gate width in a complimentary metal oxide semiconductor based device). Currently the semiconductor manufacturing industry is at 0.115 um technology node which implies that the killer particle is larger than 0.0115 um. Such small particles are difficult to remove since the ratio of the force of adhesion to removal increases for smaller particles. For submicron particles, the primary force of adhesion of particles to surfaces is the Van der Waals force which depends on the size of the particle, the distance of particle to substrate surface and the Hamaker constant. The Van der Waals force for a spherical particle on a flat substrate is given as in eqn. 1.

$$F_{Ad} = \frac{A_{132} d_p}{12Z_0^2} \quad (1)$$

where;

A_{132} is the Hamaker constant of the system composed of the particle, the surface, and the intervening medium.

d_p is the particle diameter

Z_0 is the distance of the particle from the surface.

The Hamaker constant A_{132} is given as in (2)

$$A_{132} = A_{12} + A_{33} - A_{13} - A_{23} \quad (2)$$

Where $A_{ij} = (A_i * A_{jj})^{1/2}$ and A_{ii} is the Hamaker constant of material i.

The Hamaker constant is theoretically calculated using either the Lifshitz or the London models. The Hamaker constant for particles and surfaces used in integrated circuit manufacturing processes is given in literature [1, 2] and has been seen to be less when the intervening medium is liquid as compared to air. The Van der Waals force being directly proportional to the Hamaker constant, therefore gets reduced when there is a liquid layer between the particle and the surface. Figure 1 shows a schematic of the post via etch wafer with the FM on the surface and inside the structure.

Prior Art

The prior art involves the use of CO₂ or Argon cryogenic spray for removing FM from surfaces (Aerosol Surface Processing, Rose et. al., Pat#5,931,721; Substrate Cleaning Method and Apparatus, Aoki, Pat. #6,036,581; Photoresist and redeposition removal using carbon dioxide jet spray, Bowers, Pat. #5,853,962; Aerosol Surface Processing, Rose et. al., Pat. #6,203,406; High Dispersion Carbon Dioxide Snow Apparatus, Zito, Pat. # 5,775,127). In all of the above prior arts, the FM are removed by physical force involving momentum transfer to the contaminants. Since there is no chemical component to the cleaning mechanism, this process is ineffective for removing small submicron particles and complex polymeric residues as generated by dielectric etch process. The prior art entitled Aerosol Substrate Cleaner, Fishkin et. al., Pat. #6,332,470 talks about using vapor only or in conjunction with high pressure liquid droplet for cleaning semiconductor substrate. Unfortunately, the liquid impact does not have sufficient momentum transfer capability as the solid CO₂ and will therefore not be as effective in removing the small particles for which the ratio of force of adhesion to removal increases. Residue Removal by Supercritical Fluids, McCullough, et. al., Pat. #5,908,510 talks of an idea of using cryogenic aerosol in conjunction with supercritical fluid or liquid CO₂. Since CO₂ is a non-polar molecule the solvation capability of polar FM is significantly reduced. Also since the liquid or supercritical CO₂ formation requires high pressure (greater than 75 psi for liquid and 1080 psi for supercritical), the equipment becomes expensive.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The invention uses a liquid such as, but not limited to, ethanol and acetone mixture to reduce the Van der Waals force of adhesion (75% reduction for a silica particle on bare Si wafer when the intervening medium between particle and surface is ethanol-acetone mixture as compared to air).

The liquid spray on the surface will facilitate the removal of FM with CO₂ snow cleaning where the removal mechanism will be physical in nature.

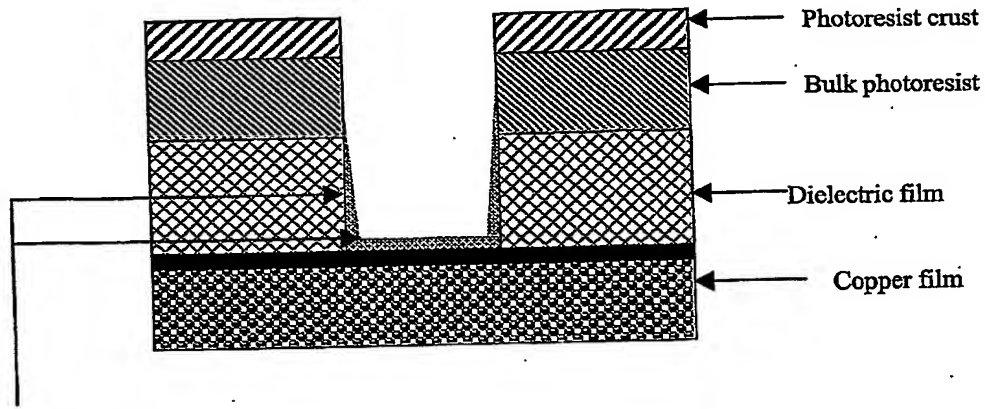
DETAILED DESCRIPTION

The invention proposes to utilize the reduction of Van der Waals force of adhesion by the introduction of liquid film on the wafer surface to aid in particle removal by the physical action of the CO₂ snow spray. In wet cleaning, a similar approach is used where the liquid medium reduces the Van der Waals force which helps the physical brush cleaning process to remove the contaminants.

One embodiment of this practice is spraying the liquid from a nozzle while spinning the wafer on a chuck to form a thin layer of liquid film on the wafer surface. Following the liquid spray, the CO₂ snow spray could then be applied over the wafer surface for particle removal. Alternatively the liquid could be applied through a second nozzle by atomization or by condensation of a vapor onto the surface of the substrate.

[1]. Particle Control for Semiconductor Manufacturing, Ed. R. P. Donovan, Marcel Dekker Inc., NY, 1990.

[2]. Handbook of Semiconductor Wafer Cleaning Technology, Ed. Werner Kern, Noyes Publications, NJ, 1993.



Etch residue from sputter

Fig. 1. Drawing of a post-etch structure showing remaining crusted resist and polymeric etch residues on the sidewall of the feature.

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